

# 'New old' vet home

OFFICIALS BREAK GROUND ON \$47 MILLION FACILITY AT RETSIL

BY KEN SWARNER/Editor

## Buildings at the Washington

Veterans Home in Retstil date back to the 1930s and 40s — but their days are up. Last Friday, officials turned some dirt on what will be a \$47 million renovation to add more beds and a homier environment for military veterans living there.

"Half the campus is under demolition," said Barbara Culley, associate director at the home.

When the dust clears, Retstil will have a new 240 bed skilled nursing facility, new kitchen, dining facility and town square featuring an improved post office, barber shop, store, recreational facilities, physical therapy facilities and much more.

The state's legislature approved the project two years ago and put up \$16 million which the federal government matched with \$31 million, according to Jerry Towne, the Home's director. "It's going to look great," Towne added.

Buildings at the Veterans Home didn't meet seismic requirements, not where they conducive to new approaches in healthcare. Culley said current trends are to make facilities more home like with warm colors, quilts and comforters, nice bath towels and decoration. The new skilled facilities will have living rooms and other amenities that promote better health.

"It's called Resident Centered Care — our new environment will fit that model," Culley added.

The Veterans Home's assisted living and domiciliary buildings won't be torn down. In the future, Towne said they hope to replace those with additional funds. The current skilled nursing buildings will also remain to be used for additional programs yet to be determined.

Currently, The Veterans Home features 104 assisted living beds, 150 skilled nursing beds and eight domiciliary beds. Like the state's other two veterans homes in Orling and Spokane, there is a waiting list.

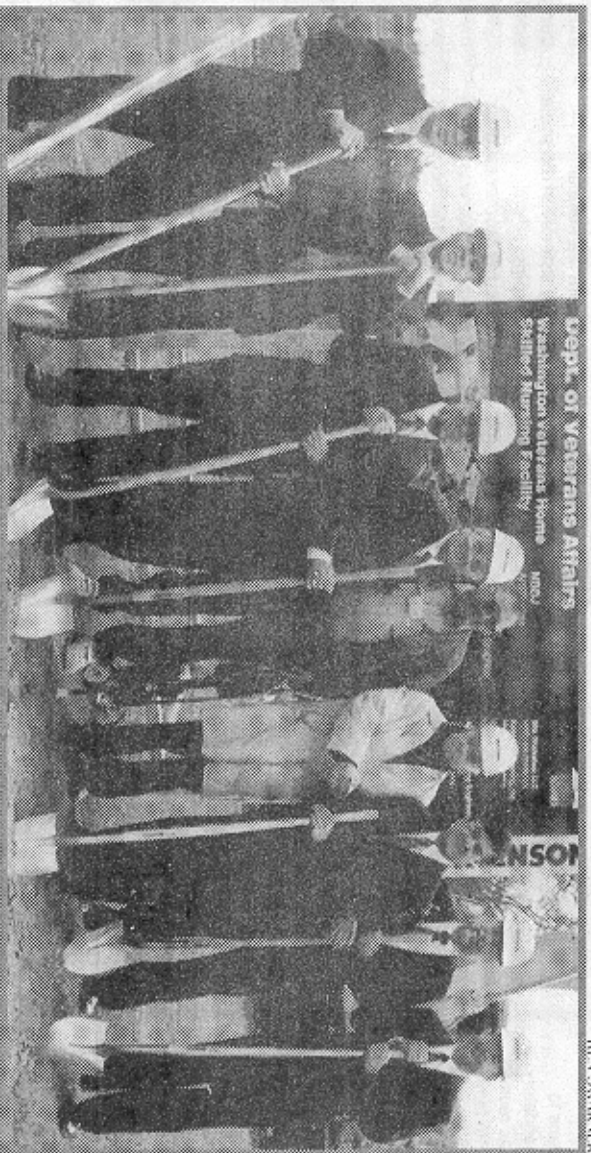
Residents are military veterans from Washington State with an honorable discharge. Typically, they are men, and in most cases don't have the financial means to provide for their own health-

care.

"But we do have some military veterans who pay for their own healthcare but live here because they like the camaraderie," Culley said.

Towne said ages range from 35 to 101.

The Veterans Home has undergone other renovations in the past, but now and in the future, the 1910 Chapel will remain.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Robert Fukai - Director of General Administration, State of Washington, William Sanford - NBBJ, John King - Director of Veteran Affairs, State of Washington, Secretary Anthony Principi - US Dept. Veterans Affairs, Dave Riggs - Retstil resident council chairman, Bill Davis - resident, Governor Gary Locke, Jerry Towne - Retstil Superintendent, David Mortenson - Mortenson Construction